

**STAFF REPORT
PLANNING COMMISSION**

DATE: NOVEMBER 23, 2010

CASE NO: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

REQUEST: CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED LAND USE MAP, LAND USE DESIGNATION CONSOLIDATION, AND GENERAL PLAN GOALS

LOCATION: CITY-WIDE

APPLICANT: CITY OF LA QUINTA

BACKGROUND:

The City last updated its General Plan in 2002. After its adoption, the City experienced tremendous growth through 2008, which resulted in build out of much of the land available in the City limits. Although the current economic conditions have stalled development, it can be expected that when the recovery occurs, the City will once again be under pressure for development. Additionally, State legislation, including AB32 and SB375, as well as local concerns and interests have changed since 2002. There is greater focus by residents and regulators on quality of life issues, including the City's fiscal stability in the long term; the preservation and improvement of fundamental resources such as air and water; and encouraging other means of transportation that promote a healthy lifestyle and minimize or shorten the length of automobile trips. These conditions cumulatively resulted in the City undertaking an update of the General Plan.

The General Plan Update will include the City limits and the City's Sphere of Influence, and will not include lands to the east of the Sphere, which are currently identified as a portion of "Planning Area 2" in the General Plan. The General Plan boundary was discussed with the Planning Commission and City Council in February and the attached land use map reflects such. The General Plan will also include two new Elements, an Economic Development Element and a Sustainable Community Element, which will directly address issues that have become important to the City; economic stability and improvement and protection of resources, as described above.

Immediately following commencing the update effort, Staff undertook a series of community outreach meetings, which were summarized for the Planning Commission and City Council in February. Since that time, Staff has undertaken a review of the Land Use Map; begun the process of drafting the updated General Plan; and completed technical analysis needed for the General Plan Update. In order to proceed to completion of the General Plan, and preparation of the General Plan Environmental Impact Report, Staff has prepared the draft Land Use Map, associated statistical

analysis, land use designation changes, and master listing of General Plan Goals for the Planning Commission's and City Council's consideration at this time.

PROPOSAL:

Statistical Analysis: Existing vs. Proposed General Plan

As described above, the current General Plan includes more geographic area than now proposed. As shown in Tables 1 and 2, below, the current General Plan encompasses 34,112 acres, while the proposed General Plan has a total land area of 30,957 acres. Since 2002, the City's Sphere of Influence was expanded to include Planning Area 1 and a portion of Planning Area 2. The reduction in land area is from the balance of Planning Area 2, which is no longer included in the proposed General Plan. The current and proposed General Plan Land Use Maps are attached as Exhibits 1 and 2, respectively. Full size maps will also be provided for the Planning Commission at the meeting.

Table 1									
Proposed General Plan Land Use Statistical Summary									
	City Limits			Sphere of Influence			Total		
Land Use Designation	Acres Developed	Acres Vacant	Total Acres	Acres Developed	Acres Vacant	Total Acres	Acres Developed	Acres Vacant	Total Acres
Low Density Residential	4,170.6	1,675.9	5,846.5	567.0	6,812.7	7,379.7	4,737.6	8,488.6	13,226.2
Medium/High Density Residential	1,281.4	350.3	1,631.7	0.2	24.4	24.6	1,281.6	374.7	1,656.3
General Commercial	383.2	186.4	569.6	28.5	256.6	285.1	411.7	443.0	854.7
Tourist Commercial	208.3	138.6	346.9	-	-	-	208.3	138.6	346.9
Village Commercial	77.4	12.9	90.3	-	-	-	77.4	12.9	90.3
Industrial/Light Manufacturing	-	-	0.0	-	63.8	63.8	-	63.8	63.8
Major Community Facilities	238.0	160.0	398.0	28.2	1.6	29.8	266.2	161.6	427.8
Open Space	6,518.0	5,520.8	12,038.8	-	-	-	6,518.0	5,520.8	12,038.8
Street Rights of Way	1,672.0	261.7	1,933.7	67.0	251.5	318.5	1,734.4	513.2	2,252.2
Total	14,548.8	8,306.6	22,855.4	690.8	7,410.6	8,101.4	15,239.6	15,717.2	30,956.8

Table 2
Current General Plan Land Use Statistical Summary

General Plan Designations	City Limits			Sphere of Influence			P1			P2			Grand Total
	Developed	Undeveloped	City Limits Total	Developed	Undeveloped	SOI Total	Developed	Undeveloped	P1 Total	Developed	Undeveloped	P2 Total	
VLDR Very Low Density	261	198.2	459.2				0		0	64.4		64.4	523.6
LDR Low Density	3,202.5	3,096.9	6,299.4	549.5	286.5	836	2,447.20	551.2	2,998.4	5,213.6	846.8	6,060.3	16,194.1
MDR Medium Density	1,063.9	324.2	1,388.1	171.7	66.2	237.9	58.2	62.7	120.8	358.8	100.5	459.3	2,206.10
MHDR Medium-High Density	14.5	69	83.4			0	259.7	78.9	338.6				422
HDR High Density	0.6	86.7	87.3							93.7	71.4	165.1	252.4
Total Residential Acreage	4,542.4	3,775.0	8,317.5	721.3	352.7	1,073.90	2,765.0	692.7	3,457.8	5,730.4	1,018.70	6,749.1	19,598.2
M/RC Mixed Commercial	87.9	309	397	4.5		4.5	0			69.3	14.3	83.6	485
CC Community Commercial	24.2	93.7	117.9				7.2	2.9	10	219.7	33.1	252.8	380.7
NC Neighborhood Commercial	61.8	50.8	112.5				47.2	2.5	49.7				162.2
CP Commercial Park		64	64										64
O Office		39.9	39.9							43.7		43.7	83.6
TC Tourist Commercial	206.2	145.3	351.5										351.5
VC Village Commercial	64.4	68.8	133.2										133.2
Total Commercial Acreage	444.5	771.5	1,216.0	4.5	0	4.5	54.4	5.3	59.7	332.7	47.3	380.1	1,660.2
I Industrial										319.7	60.6	380.3	380.3
MC Major Comm. Facilities	178.3	13.1	191.3	2		2	29		29		36.7	36.7	259
P Park Facilities	601.3	128	729.3										729.3
OS Open Space	1,246.2	4,258.7	5,505.0						44.5	44.5	496.2	149.4	645.6
G Golf Course Open Space	3,125.3	986.7	4,111.90	229.8	88	317.8	198.8	59.8	258.6				4,688.3
W Watercourse/ Flood Control	468.9	132.8	601.7										601.7
Total Other Acreage	5,619.90	5,519.3	11,139.2	231.8	88	319.8	227.8	104.3	332.1	815.9	246.6	1,062.5	12,853.6
Grand Total	10,606.7	10,065.8	20,672.6	957.6	440.7	1,398.30	3,047.3	802.3	3,849.5	6,879.0	1,312.70	8,191.7	34,112.0
Total Acreage	10,606.7	10,065.8	20,672.6	957.6	440.7	1,398.3	3,047.3	802.3	3,849.5	6,879.0	1,312.7	8,191.7	34,112.0

In the overall, the land use map is not significantly changing from what is currently adopted. The mix of land uses and the comparative ratios of residential to commercial lands will remain consistent. Changes are proposed to the terminology which identifies the land use designations, and are further discussed under "Consolidation of Land Use Definitions," below.

The changes in land area will also change the build out population, the number of housing units, and the commercial square footage. Table 3 shows that the buildout population of the current General Plan would be 160,457. The proposed General Plan results in a smaller buildout population of 147,223, a decrease of approximately 10%.

Table 3 Comparison of Build Out Units and Population Current and Proposed General Plan				
Area	Current General Plan		Proposed General Plan	
	Buildout Dwelling Units	Buildout Population	Buildout Dwelling Units	Buildout Population
City	25,038	60,639	29,669	85,447
Sphere	1,493	4,211	21,444	61,759
Planning Area #1	11,938	33,779	N/A	N/A
Planning Area #2	21,693	61,828	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	60,162	160,457	51,113	147,206

As shown in Table 4, the current General Plan will result in 15.9 million square feet of commercial space at buildout. Table 5 illustrates the potential square footage which will result in the proposed General Plan's build out.

Table 4 Current General Plan Commercial Development Potential at General Plan Buildout						
Area	Developed Acres	Vacant Acres	Total Acres	Existing Sq. Ft.	Potential Future Sq. Ft.	Total Buildout Sq. Ft.
City	444.5	771.5	1,216	4,259,732	7,393,439	11,653,171
Sphere	4.5	0.0	4.5	43,124	0	43,124
Planning Area #1	54.4	5.4	59.8	521,326	51,749	573,075
Planning Area #2	332.7	47.4	380.1	3,188,330	454,243	3,642,574
TOTAL	836.1	824.3	1,660.4	8,012,512	7,899,431	15,911,944

Table 5 Proposed General Plan Commercial Development Potential at General Plan Buildout						
Area	Developed Acres	Vacant Acres	Total Acres	Existing Sq. Ft.	Potential Future Sq. Ft.	Total Buildout Sq. Ft.
City	668.9	337.9	1,006.8	6,410,202	3,238,163	9,648,365
Sphere	28.5	256.6	285.1	273,121	2,459,049	2,732,170
TOTAL	697.4	594.5	1,291.9	6,683,324	5,697,212	12,380,536

The proposed General Plan will result in a 30% reduction in commercial square footage, due primarily to the commercial lands which were included in Planning Area 2 (particularly in the Kohl Ranch Specific Plan). However, the proposed General Plan maintains almost exactly the same amount of Tourist Commercial land (346.9 acres) as the current General Plan (351.5 acres), thereby preserving this fiscally important land use.

Consolidation of Land Use Definitions

Staff reviewed the current Land Use definitions, and determined that the consolidation of some of these designations was appropriate for the General Plan. The result is that there will be fewer land use designations in the proposed General Plan than there are in the current General Plan. Importantly, however, the zoning designations will remain as they currently are, which is at a higher level of detail than the General Plan. Since the General Plan is the broadest policy document, it is appropriate that there be fewer designations in this document, and that the specificity be provided in the Zoning Ordinance. The consolidated designations are shown below.

Existing Designations	Proposed Designations	Comments
Very Low Density Low Density	Low Density	Consolidates the two single family land use designations into one.
Medium Density Medium High Density High Density	Medium/High Density	Consolidates the three designations which allow multi-family residential into one.
Regional Commercial Community Commercial Neighborhood Commercial Commercial Park/Office	General Commercial	Consolidates the retail commercial designations into one.
Resort Mixed Use Tourist Commercial	Tourist Commercial	Preserves the tourism related designations for their economic importance
Village Commercial	Village Commercial	No change.

Existing Designations	Proposed Designations	Comments
Industrial/Light Manufacturing	Industrial/Light Manufacturing	No change.
Major Community Facilities	Major Community Facilities	No change.
Park Open Space Golf Course Watercourse	Open Space	Consolidates the open space designations into one.

The consolidations shown above represent a logical simplification of the Land Use nomenclature. The Land Use designations which have been preserved intact are considered important distinctions which should be highlighted in the General Plan.

In the case of the Village Commercial designation, the Village is a unique and special place – the heart of La Quinta in many ways. It is therefore important to preserve this area and highlight it in the Land Use Element.

Similarly, the Tourist Commercial designation has historically been an economic driver for the City – providing a significant contribution to the City’s fiscal balance because of the resulting Transient Occupancy Tax. It is important, in the Land Use Element and the new Economic Development Element, to highlight the existing and potential value of these lands. The revenue which will result from existing and future development of hotel and resort development will also be analyzed in the fiscal impact analysis which will be prepared for the General Plan EIR.

The General Plan will also enable the creation of a new overlay Zoning designation – Mixed Use. The Mixed Use Zoning designation could apply on all the General Commercial or Village Commercial lands, if certain specific development criteria are met. An important consideration will be the preservation of the retail commercial potential of these lands, and its associated fiscal benefit for the City, while balancing the need to provide residential units in close proximity to jobs and transit, as required by SB375. The development criteria will be detailed in an update to the Zoning Ordinance, which will follow the completion of the General Plan Update. The Mixed Use overlay zone may result in one or several projects in either the General Commercial or the Village Commercial zones. It is impossible to predict how much land might be dedicated to Mixed Use in the future. However, prior to the economic downturn, Mixed Use had become an important tool for many California jurisdictions, allowing the intensification of lands to provide for both residential and commercial uses on one site. The potential benefits for La Quinta include a continued strong retail sales base; combined with customers for that retail base in close proximity to it; reduced automobile trips and reduced air pollution; better access to transit services for residents to get to work; and a wider range of residential product on offer to future residents.

Master List of Goals

Staff has reviewed the General Plan’s existing Goals. This review determined that the majority of the Goals are still applicable today, and consistent with the policy direction

the City is currently implementing. The review therefore resulted in some minor modification of the Goals to reflect changed conditions and/or policy. These revised Goals are attached as Exhibit 3. These Goals will be used as the basis for the development of policies and programs in each Element of the proposed General Plan.

In addition to these goals, new goals will be created for the two new Elements – Economic Development and Sustainable Community.

Staff respectfully requests that the Planning Commission review the goals, consider any amendments which it may wish to make, and provide a recommendation to the City Council.

CONCLUSION:

The General Plan Update does not significantly change the land use pattern in the City, or the balance of land uses in the City. This review by first the Planning Commission and then the City Council, is provided to allow staff to update both bodies, and assure that Staff is proceeding in a direction which is consistent with your vision for the City.

Following the conclusion of the discussion on these issues with the City Council at its meeting of December 7, 2010, staff will proceed with the completion of the General Plan document, and will initiate the General Plan Environmental Impact Report. It is currently expected that the draft General Plan and General Plan EIR will be complete in the late Spring, and that public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council will occur in September and October of 2011. As the Planning Commission is aware, the General Plan EIR will be released for a 45 day public comment period, during which Staff plans to conduct an additional series of community outreach meetings, to present the General Plan to the City's residents and businesses.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Planning Commission consider the Land Use Map and Master Goals, make any changes it may feel are necessary, and direct staff to forward the Map and Goals to the City Council for its review and approval.

Prepared by:



Les Johnson
Planning Director

ATTACHMENTS

1. Current (2002) General Plan Land Use Map
2. Proposed General Plan Land Use Map
3. Master List of Goals

EXHIBIT City of La Quinta 2002 General Plan Land Use Map

LEGEND

- Roads
- Township/Range Sections
- Railroads
- City Limits
- Planning Area #1
- Planning Area #2
- City Sphere of Influence
- Residential Land Uses
 - VLDR Very Low Density up to 2 du/ac
 - LDR Low Density up to 4 du/ac
 - MDR Medium Density up to 8 du/ac
 - MHDR Medium-High Density up to 12 du/ac
 - HDR High Density up to 16 du/ac
 - Hillside Overlay
 - Agriculture/Equestrian Overlay
- Commercial Land Uses
 - M/RC Mixed/Regional Commercial
 - CC Community Commercial
 - NC Neighborhood Commercial
 - CP Commercial Park
 - O Office
 - TC Tourist Commercial
 - VC Village Commercial
- Other Land Uses
 - I Industrial
 - MC Major Community Facilities
 - P Park Facilities
 - OS Open Space
 - G Golf Course Open Space
 - W Watercourse/Flood Control
 - P Floating Park Designation

Scale
1:72,000

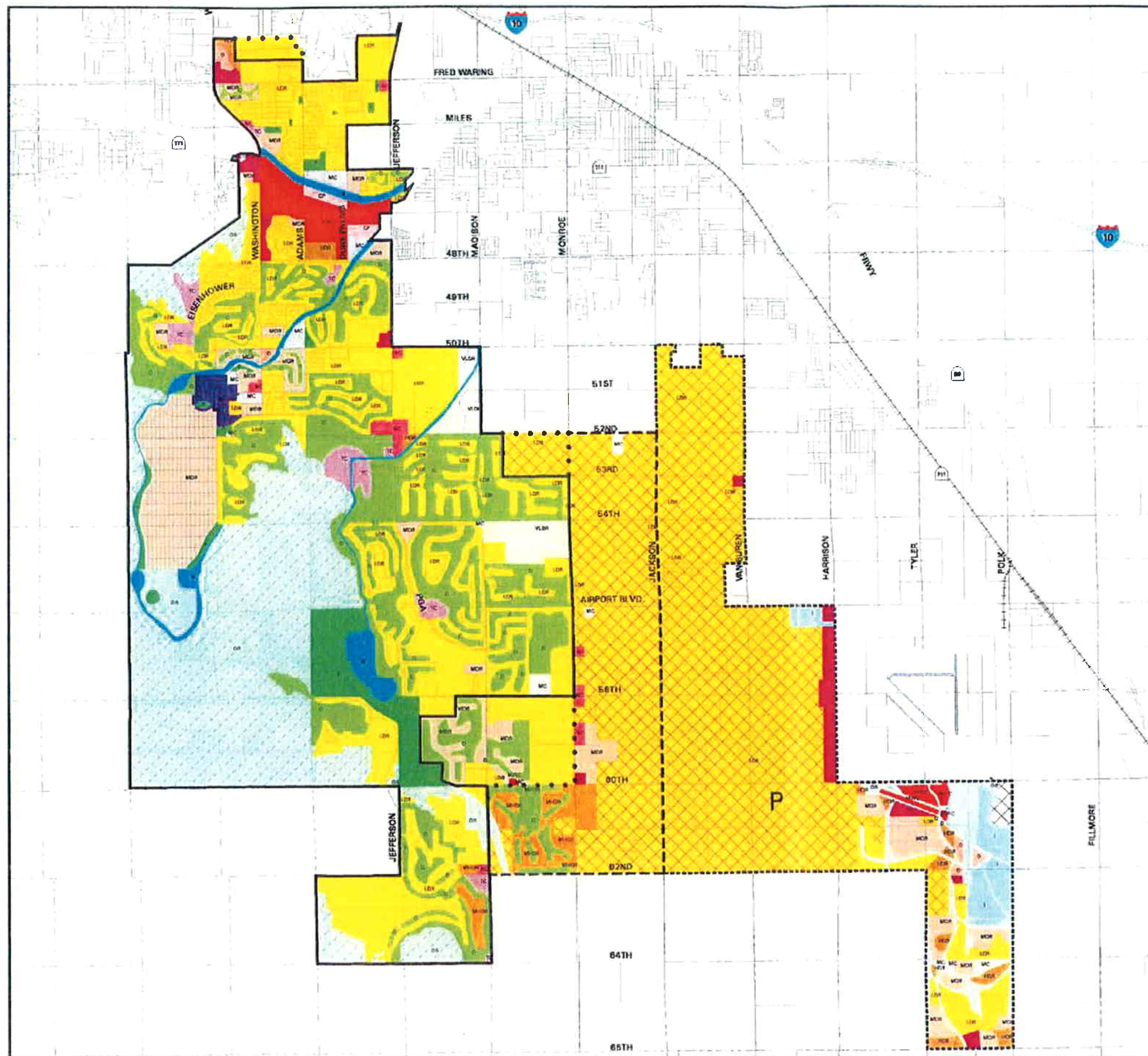
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Feet



Riverside County Vicinity Map

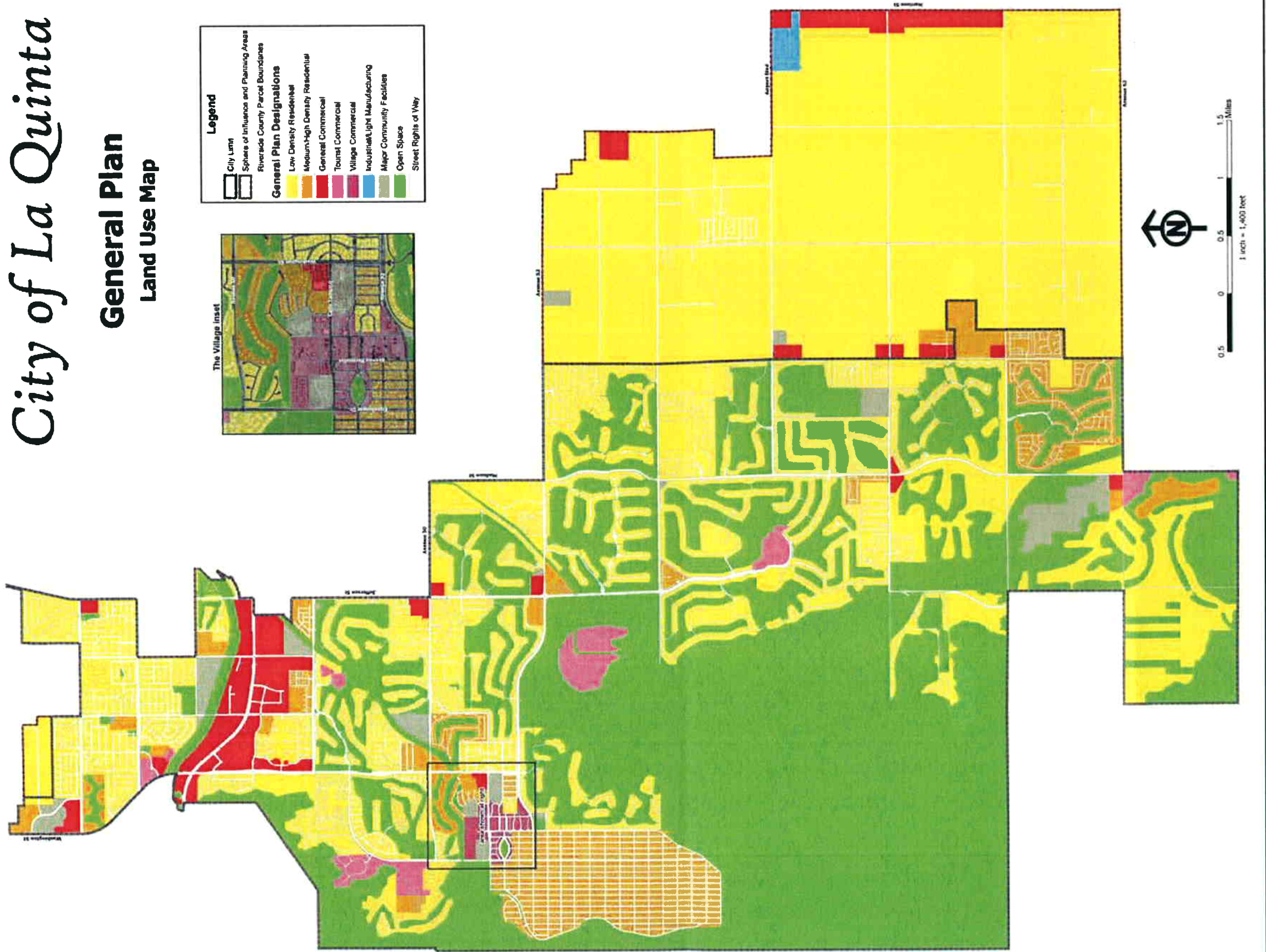


Map Prepared on: June 19, 2002
Map Prepared by: Aerial Information Systems
Map Version No.: 8



City of La Quinta

General Plan Land Use Map



Source: AIS Aerial Information Systems, Preferred General Plan Land Use Map, 08.10.10

Master List of Goals

ADMINISTRATION GOAL

- ♦ An internally consistent General Plan which supports and implements the Community Vision and Guiding Principles.

GENERAL LAND USE GOALS

- ♦ **GOAL 1** - Land use compatibility throughout the City.
- ♦ **GOAL 2** - High quality design that complements and enhances the City.

RESIDENTIAL GOALS

- ♦ **GOAL 1** - Safe and identifiable neighborhoods that provide a sense of place.
- ♦ **GOAL 2** - Maintenance and protection of existing neighborhoods.
- ♦ **Goal 3** A broad range of housing types and choices for all residents of the City.

COMMERCIAL GOALS

- ♦ **GOAL 1** - A balanced and varied economic base which provides a broad range of goods and services to the City's residents and the region. (potentially duplicate in Econ. Dev.)
- ♦ **GOAL 2** - The continued growth of the tourism and resort industries in the City. (to be used in Economic Development Element)
- ♦ **GOAL 3** - Innovative land uses in the Village and on Highway 111.

TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION GOALS

- ♦ **GOAL 1** - A transportation and circulation network that efficiently, safely and economically moves people, vehicles, and goods using facilities that meet the current demands and projected needs of the City.
- ♦ **GOAL 2** A circulation system that includes connected transit, alternative vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian networks.

OPEN SPACE ELEMENT GOALS

- ♦ **GOAL 1** - Preservation, conservation and management of the City's open space lands and scenic resources for enhanced recreational, environmental and economic purposes.
- ♦ **GOAL 2** - Good stewardship of natural open space and preservation of open space areas.
- ♦ **GOAL 3** - Preservation of scenic resources as vital contributors to the City's economic health and overall quality of life.

PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT GOALS

- ♦ **GOAL 1** - A comprehensive system of parks, and recreation facilities and services that meet the active and passive needs of all residents and visitors.

Master List of Goals

AIR QUALITY GOALS

- ♦ **GOAL 1** - A reduction in all air emissions generated within the City.

ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES GOALS

- **GOAL 1** - The sustainable use of energy and mineral resources.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES GOALS

- ♦ **GOAL 1** - The protection and preservation of native and environmentally significant biological resources and their habitats.

WATER RESOURCES GOALS

- ♦ **GOAL 1** - The efficient use and conservation of the City's water resources.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICES GOALS

- ♦ **EMERGENCY SERVICES GOAL** - Effective comprehensive and responsive emergency services.
- ♦ **PUBLIC FACILITIES GOAL** - Public facilities and services that are adequate and convenient to all City residents.
- ♦ **DOMESTIC WATER GOAL** - Domestic water facilities and services which adequately serve the existing and long-term needs of the City.
- ♦ **SANITARY SEWER GOAL** - Sanitary sewer facilities and services which adequately serve the existing and long-term needs of the City.

- ♦ **WATER, SEWER & PUBLIC UTILITIES GOAL** - Adequate water, sewer and utilities to serve the build out of the City.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS GOALS

- ♦ **GOAL 1** - Protection from the potential impacts of hazardous and toxic materials.

GEOLOGIC AND SEISMIC HAZARDS GOALS

- ♦ **GOAL 1** - Protection of the health and safety of the community and its property from geologic and seismic hazards.

FLOODING AND HYDROLOGY GOALS

- ♦ **GOAL 1** - The protection of the general health, safety and welfare of the community from flooding and associated hydrological hazards.

NOISE GOALS

- ♦ **GOAL 1** - A healthful noise environment which complements the City's residential and resort character.

CULTURAL RESOURCES GOALS

- ♦ **GOAL 1** - The protection of significant archaeological, historic and paleontological resources which occur in the City.